



STATE OF NEW YORK

December 10, 2020

Alex M. Azar II
Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

We stand together in expressing serious concern with the Trump administration's vaccine distribution plan. While we are encouraged by recent reports regarding the vaccines' efficacy, there is urgent work to be done to ensure vaccination efforts are both expeditious and fair.

Governors need federal funding in order to execute comprehensive distribution plans to guarantee that all communities have access to the vaccine. The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials estimates that a comprehensive vaccine distribution program would cost approximately \$8 billion. To date, the Trump Administration has administered a mere \$200 million to the states.

Without adequate funding, distribution will not be equitable. COVID-19 has laid bare chronic health disparities in our country that led communities of color to suffer disproportionately from this virus. Communities of color disproportionately suffer from pre-existing conditions, such as asthma, obesity and hypertension, that compound the harm the virus can cause -- Black Americans died at twice the rate of white Americans due to COVID, and Latinos died at one and a half times the rate of whites. The underlying reality is that communities of color lack access to healthcare institutions and services. But in its current form, the Trump Administration's vaccine plan relies on private health facilities that have historically excluded Black and brown communities. By relying on a flawed, biased system, the administration's approach will only serve to further widen existing disparities in health outcomes.

The essential workers who carried this nation through the worst of this pandemic are predominately people of color. They especially deserve a national vaccine plan designed to ensure they are protected.

Marc Morial, undersigned and the President and CEO of the National Urban League, has said the Trump Administration's plan is, "thoughtless, careless and needs to be taken back to the drawing board." Derrick Johnson, undersigned and President and CEO of the NAACP, has said that, "any introduction of a vaccine plan devoid of the infrastructure we know is effective within the Black community reinforces the same incompetence that has affected far too many communities that have been neglected in the midst of this global pandemic." The Reverend Al Sharpton, undersigned and the President and Founder of National Action Network said, "I've seen this movie before. Many Black Americans live in healthcare deserts, where there are no hospitals or healthcare centers in our area. This has hurt us badly during the COVID crisis. This unfair treatment is about to happen again. I don't see how we will see equal distribution of the vaccine based on the federal plan. That must be fixed immediately."

The Black and brown communities that were first on the list of who died from COVID cannot be last on the list of who receives the vaccine. Our federal government needs to stand up and deliver a world-class vaccination program that quickly and comprehensively reaches underserved communities of color. The private market alone is incapable. We need to enlist faith-based organizations, neighborhood groups and local non-profits with deep roots in Black, brown and poor communities to get this done. And we need the funding to do so.

This pandemic cannot end, and our country will not truly be safe, until everyone has access to a vaccine. The Trump Administration must implement a national vaccine plan that does not leave any community behind, and it must do so now. Time is short. We stand prepared to work with your team and the federal government to execute a vaccination program worthy of these United States.

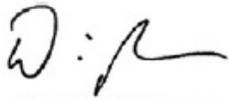
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Cuomo", written in a cursive style.

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo

cc: President-elect Biden
New York State Congressional Delegation
Members of the Congressional Black Caucus

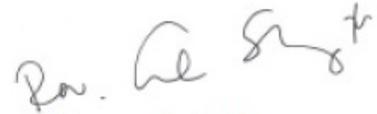
Enc. Additional Supporters



Derrick Johnson
President & CEO
NAACP



Marc Morial
President & CEO
National Urban League



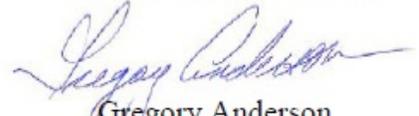
Reverend Al Sharpton
President & Founder
National Action Network

Wilbur Aldridge

Wilbur Aldridge
Mid Hudson/Westchester Regional
Director
NAACP New York State Conference

Kevin Alexander

Kevin W. Alexander
President & CEO
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Bishop Dr. Roger Ball
Founding Pastor
Family Worship Center



Mark Barbee
International Representative
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Daniel Barber

Daniel Barber
CCOP President
NYCHA Citywide Council of
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Thomas Beauford, Jr.

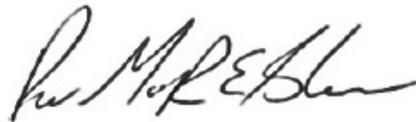
Thomas Beauford, Jr.
President & CEO
Buffalo Urban League



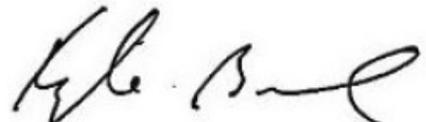
Reverend Dr. A. R. Bernard
Senior Pastor
Christian Cultural Center

Twiggy Billue

Twiggy Billue
President
National Action Network Syracuse
Chapter



Reverend Mark Blue
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Buffalo Branch NAACP



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Linda Brown-Robinson Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts

Linda Brown-Robinson
President
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Reverend Dr. Calvin O. Butts
Senior Pastor
Abyssinian Baptist Church



Joy D. Calloway
Interim CEO
Planned Parenthood of Greater New
York



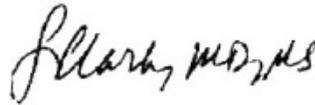
Reverend Dr. Demetrius Carolina
Pastor & Executive Director
First Central Baptist Church, The
Central Family Life Center



Robin Chappelle Golston
President & CEO
Planned Parenthood Empire State
Acts

Isma Chaudhry

Dr. Isma H. Chaudhry
Chair, Board of Trustees
Islamic Center of Long Island



Dr. Linda Clark
President & Co-Founder
Black Physicians Network of
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Senior Pastor
Pentecostal Church of Jesus Christ,
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Claudia Coger
Tenant Association President
Astoria Houses

Annie Cotton Morris

Annie Cotton Morris
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First Baptist Church of Riverhead



Shirley E. Coverdale
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Reverend Dr. Phil Craig
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The Greater Springfield
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Robert Darby
President, Bakery Confectionary
Tobacco Workers & Grain
Millers Local 36G

Rev. Troy DeCohen

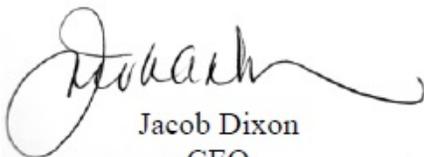
Reverend Troy DeCohen
President
United Black Clergy of Westchester

Walter Dixie

Walter Dixie
Executive Director
Jubilee Homes of Syracuse, Inc.

Geroge Dixon

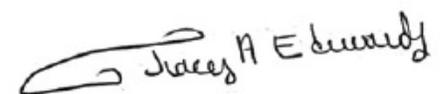
Geroge Dixon
President
NAACP Corona East Elmhurst
Chapter



Jacob Dixon
CEO
Choice for All



Hazel Dukes
President
NAACP New York State
Conference



Tracey Edwards
Long Island Regional Director
NAACP New York State
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Archbishop Eric Figueroa, Sr.
Senior Pastor, New Life Tabernacle
Metropolitan Archbishop of New
Life Covenant Archdiocese

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Bishop Orlando Findlayter
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Floyd Flake

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Nicky Hylton-Patterson
Executive Director
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Reverend Larry Jennings, Sr.
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NAACP Huntington Branch

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Bishop George Max Jones
Senior Pastor
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Executive Director
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Jennifer Jones Austin
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Maggie Larkins
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Isaac Melton
Bishop
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Reverend Greg Merriweather
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Calvary Baptist Church

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William King Moss III
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NAACP Islip Town Branch



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Senior Pastor
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Nazarene, Far Rockaway

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Jacqueline Nelson
President
NAACP Rome NY

Wade Norwood

Wade Norwood
CEO
Common Ground Health



Dr. Philip Ozuah
President & CEO
Montefiore Medical Center



Angelica Perez-Delgado
President & CEO
Ibero American Action League



Marques Phillips
Director of City Initiatives
City of Utica



Reverend Gilbert Pickett, Sr.
Senior Pastor, Mount Horeb Baptist
Church
Moderator, Eastern Baptist
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Mimi Pierre Johnson
President & CEO
Elmont Cultural Center



Barbara Powell
President
NAACP Hempstead Branch



Dr. Frances E. Pratt
President
Nyack Branch NAACP



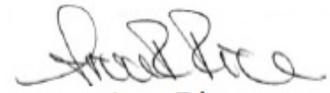
Candace Prince-Modeste
President
NAACP Jamaica Branch



Charles Rangel
Former Congressman
New York's 11th Congressional
District



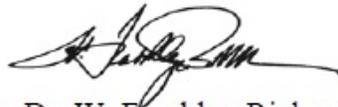
Jawwaad Rasheed
President
Mohawk Valley Frontiers
International



Arva Rice
President & CEO
New York Urban League



Bishop Calvin Rice
Senior Pastor
New Jerusalem Worship Center



Rev. Dr. W. Franklyn Richardson
Senior Pastor
Grace Baptist Church
Chairman, National Action Network



Crystal Rodriguez-Dabney
Chief of Staff & Chief Diversity
Officer
Buffalo State, State University of
New York



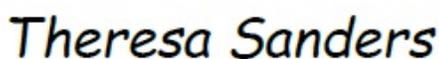
Me'Shae Rolling
Executive Director
Upstate Minority Economic
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Theresa Sanders
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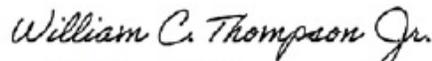
Farah Tanis
Co-Executive Director
Black Women's BluePrint

Elgin Taylor

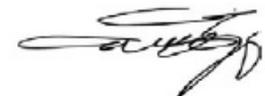
Reverend Dr. Elgin Joseph Taylor
Vice President At-Large
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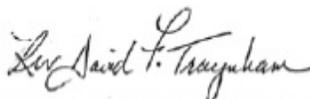
Bishop Mitchell Taylor
CEO
Urban Upbound



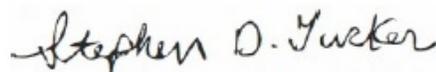
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Tamika Williams

Tamika Williams
Tenant Association President
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Abdul-Rahman Yaki

Imam Abdul-Rahman Yaki
Islamic Center of the Capital
District

Patrick Young

Reverend Patrick H. Young
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Executive Director
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